generically separated is a difficult question to decide. Agreeing, as it does, in most essential characters with *Melanitta*, I believe that it is best considered congeneric with the latter so long as *Erionetta* is included in *Somateria* and *Marila* is used in a broad sense.

Of the genera of Sea Ducks recognized in the A. O. U. 'Check-List,' perhaps the most doubt has been attached to *Charitonetta* which is not separated from *Clangula* by British authors. MacGillivray, however, states (*t. c.*) that in the Bufflehead the trachea has "scarcely any appearance of dilatation at the part which is so excessively enlarged in the Golden-eyed Duck, which in form and habits is yet very closely allied."

THE BREEDING OF THE PRAIRIE HORNED LARK AT HATLEY, STANSTEAD COUNTY, QUEBEC.

BY H. MOUSLEY.

The Prairie Horned Lark belongs to one of those progressive families of birds, which by their pushing character have so adapted themselves to their natural surroundings as to have increased their breeding range of late years from the central part of the continent even to eastern Massachusetts in 1903, at least this is the generally recognized opinion, I believe, amongst most authorities, although there are others again who contend that the bird has always occurred in small numbers throughout the northeastern states, but that it has passed unnoticed until recent years, when the increase of field collectors has drawn attention to its presence. However this may be, there are other traits in its life history which mark it out as a bird of distinction, the finding of whose nest and eggs is always looked upon by the field student as a pleasurable event. It was only during the spring of the past year, 1915, that I succeeded in finding it breeding at Hatley, although I had been on the

lookout for it for some few years previously. It is the earliest of the small song birds to nest, eggs having been found in some parts of western New York in late February and early March, but here judging from the four nests I was fortunate enough to find, the date for fresh sets appears to be from the second to the third week in April, at which time the ground is generally more or less covered with snow. Such was the case when I found the first nest on April 14 only 240 yards from my house, in a dry undulating field. It was a most interesting one in every way, composed outwardly of soft dry grasses, and heavily lined inside with the plant down and flower heads of the Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*). The hole in which it rested had partly been scooped out in a bed of Hair-cap moss (*Polytrichum commune*) which formed the back and sides, the front or south side being clear and the ground sloping gently away. Some little portion of this sloping ground right up to the edge of the nest had been banked up and paved with small pieces of cow-chips varying in size from $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{1}{2}$ inch to $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1$ inch. From a careful count made of these I found there were 49 in all, besides 8 small pieces of lichen. I am not aware that anything has been written on this subject of paving with regard to the present species, but Prof. Silloway in his 'Birds of Fergus County, Montana,' 1903, I believe first made the fact known to science in the case of the Desert Horned species; and the Rev. P. B. Peabody in a most interesting article in 'The Warbler' (Vol. 2, 1906, pages 20–27) substantiates the fact, and gives a photo of a nest of the Desert Horned Lark showing this paving. In this same article he goes on to say "It was impossible however to conjecture whether or no such clods had been added at varying times after the first completing of the nest." This point as we shall see later on I am glad to be able to clear up, at least so far as regards the one case that came under my notice of the Prairie Horned Lark. I ought perhaps to mention here that it was during the winter of 1914 that I read the above article, and when I found the nest already mentioned above, the thought occurred to me that now was my chance perhaps of finding out at what time during building operations these chips were added. With this object in view I decided to take the set of four eggs and keep a very careful watch on the birds afterwards, in the hope of catching them at their second venture.

How lucky I was will be gathered from a perusal of the following little time table as it were.

1915

April 14 First set of eggs taken at 2 P.M.

15 Larks started second nest, and at 4.30 P.M. the hole was excavated, the female being at work upon it when flushed. It was on the top of a little mound with no cattle droppings near, which had been the case with the first nest, from which it was distant 60 yards.

16 12 A.M. Five pieces of cow-chips laid in place on south side of hole, also one piece of lichen.
4.30 P.M. Eleven more chips added.

17 12.30 A.M. Nine more chips added, also foundation and rim of nest just started.
5 P.M. Foundation and rim of nest well advanced, but no more chips added.

18 12 A.M. Nest full of plant down and flower heads of pearly everlasting not yet padded into place.
5.30 P.M. Plant down now all padded into place forming a most beautiful nest.

19 11.30 A.M. One egg in nest, both birds noted in field but at some distance away.

20 11.30 A.M. Two eggs in nest, female left on my approach and flew away.

21 11.30 A.M. Three eggs in nest, got quite close before female flushed off.

22 11.30 A.M. Four eggs in nest, the female again only flushing off at my near approach.

The four eggs were practically counterparts of the first set, being minutely and evenly speckled all over, and somewhat zoned about the larger end. In the above instance it will be seen that not a vestige of building material was brought to the nest until the whole of the 25 pieces of cow-chips, and one of lichen had been laid in place, but pending further data it would hardly be wise to assume that this is invariably the case.

The next nest to come under my observation was found on April 21 by flushing the female from a set of four slightly incubated eggs. This nest was situated on a high sloping hillside about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles

from my house, and close to the Hatley cemetery, and was of similar construction to the other two, except that the paving consisted of only five pieces of cow-chip and two of lichen, and the lining in addition to the down and flower heads of the pearly everlasting consisted of four little pieces of paper, two small thistle heads, and some thistle down. It was in a hole alongside a stone, the latter forming the back or north side of the nest, the paving being on the south side as in the case of the other two. The fourth and last nest was found on April 30 and contained three young birds partly fledged. It differed in many ways from the other three, being situated in a low damp meadow, instead of a high and dry one (as in the case of the others), the bird in this matter apparently using very little judgment, and yet again as regards the paving it seemed to have displayed that marvelous instinct which birds seem at times to be endowed with, for instead of using cow-chips as a paving, which in such a wet spongy place would have been of little good, it resorted to the use of very thin and flat stones ranging in size from $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{8}$ inches to $1 \times \frac{3}{4}$ inches, of which there were thirty. The nest was nine inches from a good sized stone and forty yards from the main road to Stanstead; and I shall always remember the circumstances under which I came to find it, in as much as it disproves the fact so positively asserted in all the best text books that this species never perches in trees. It was while returning from Hatley somewhat late in the afternoon of April 29 on the above mentioned road, that a bird got up some distance ahead of me, and flew into a good sized ash tree which stood at the side of the road. As it arose I felt sure it was a Prairie Horned Lark, but when it perched in the tree, I almost dismissed the thought from my mind, for had I not read that these birds never made use of trees to perch on? However, as the bird allowed me to get opposite the tree and having a pair of field glasses, I took a careful look at it, and sure enough it turned out to be a male Prairie Horned Lark with food in its beak, which pointed to the fact that a nest of young was probably not far off, so I concealed myself, but it was rather a long time before the bird left the tree and alighted on a large boulder in the field, from which it entered the grass. After allowing a short interval to elapse I advanced, when the bird flew up, but I failed to discover any traces of a nest or young birds. As it was now getting

late I decided to leave the place and return again early the next morning. As I did so the bird again got up from the road side and flew into the tree, and as there was a small copse about 150 yards away, I secreted myself in it and awaited developments. It was not long before the bird again flew down on to the large boulder, (as on the previous evening) and disappeared in the grass, but owing to the ground taking a sudden dip, I found it would be impossible to follow the bird to the exact site of the nest from where I was concealed, and that it would be necessary for me to either get on to the other side of the road (where there was unfortunately no cover) or hide at the foot of the ash tree, around which there was some thick underbrush. However, as I wanted to further investigate the habits of this pair of birds at the nest, I remained where I was for about an hour, during which time I watched both parents come and go with food many times. Their method of proceedure was exactly the same on every occasion, and never once did they approach the nest direct, always first alighting in the top of the ash tree, and from there flying down on to the large boulder, and then walking in the grass to the nest, which I found out later on was only some few yards away. Having now thoroughly satisfied myself that under certain conditions Prairie Horned Larks will perch in trees (although this pair of birds may be the exception which proves the rule), I decided to take up my position at the foot of the ash tree and discover the nest. I therefore waited my opportunity until both birds were away, and then concealed myself as well as I could in the scrub surrounding the base of the tree. Here I was able to get a full view of the hollow into which the birds had always disappeared, and I had not long to wait before the male alighted in the tree top, then flew down to the boulder as before, from which it walked direct to the nest, and I was able to mark the exact spot. No wonder on the previous evening I had failed to locate the nest, for of all the most perfect cases of a nest and its contents conforming to their natural surroundings this was the best I think I have ever come across, for on going to it again later on in the day it took me some few minutes to pick it out, although I knew almost the exact spot where to look. I visited the nest again on May 4, to find the young larks had left, but I discovered one in the grass not far off, and soon had the male (by the way the male

seemed to do the major part of the feeding) close round me in a most excited state, and as I continued to retain the young one, he eventually flew up into the ash tree, where he remained until I released it, and removed from the locality. The average dimensions of the four nests found are as follows, viz: Outside diameter $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches, inside $2\frac{1}{4}$, outside depth $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, inside $1\frac{1}{2}$, and it will be noticed all were lined with the plant down and flower heads of the Pearly Everlasting, a plant which grows very abundantly here, and is much used by many species of birds for nesting purposes, especially by robins who use it largely in the foundations of their nests.

NOTES ON THE EIDER.[1]

By Johan Beetz, Piashte Bay, Canadian Labrador.[2]

Translated from the French and Annotated

by Charles W. Townsend, M.D.

Plate XV.

The eastern coast of North America possesses four well defined species of Eiders, although naturalists recognize only three. These are the American Eider (*Somateria dresseri dresseri*) with large rounded membranous processes extending backwards from the beak; the Unclassed or Intermediate Eider[3] with semi-rounded processes; the Northern Eider (*S. mollissima borealis*) with pointed processes, and the King Eider (*S. spectabilis*).

[1] Read before the Nuttall Ornithological Club, Dec. 20, 1915.

[2] M. Johan Beetz, who has resided for twenty years at Piashte Bay mid-way between Esquimaux Point and Natashquan — now officially known as Bay *Johan Beetz*,— is a Belgian by birth and a college graduate. With Mr. A. C. Bent I had the pleasure of visiting him in the spring of 1909, and I spent five days at his house in June, 1915. He is a keen observer and has made an interesting and valuable collection of birds of the coast. He has kindly given me permission to translate and annotate this paper on the Eider. C. W. T.

[3] See note at the end of the article.